

Introduction

This is a book for every Catholic.

Make no mistake—Fr. Faber’s original work on the Seven Dolors of Our Lady (*At the Foot of the Cross*, of which the present book is but one chapter) is sublime. One could argue that it stands in the field of Marian literature virtually unsurpassed for the wealth of its insights and the grandeur of its expressions. Truly, its pathos is breathtaking. Its thoughts are deep and original and well-nigh heartbreakingly beautiful. It deserves to be read by every serious Catholic on earth, not once but many, many times; for the love of Mary, we know, is the surest, easiest way to advance in the love of Christ, and this is the whole purpose of our mortal existence.

But, interestingly enough, when we once recommended Fr. Faber’s book to a devout laywoman of our acquaintance, her response was, “Is it hard?”

“Well, yes,” we faltered. “His style requires a bit of unpacking at times. But it is well worth the effort.”

Far from being reassured, the good lady was visibly disappointed, explaining that, at the end of the day, she could not see herself having the mental energy needed dive into “a hard read.”

We knew she was not alone in such sentiments. Given the general busyness of the typical modern lifestyle, it is not surprising that many people would be deterred by a style of writing in which sentences run on for paragraphs, and paragraphs continue for pages.

It was to address just such a dilemma that we thought to *re-present* Fr. Faber’s work. If the priest-scholars Fathers Walter Farrell and Martin J. Healy could condense the entire *Summa* of St. Thomas Aquinas for the sake of getting the solid principles of Thomistic theology into as many hands as possible, surely it could not be wrong to use a similar tactic in order to make devotion to our Mother of Sorrows as widespread as possible.

Proceeding reverently, sentence by sentence, we adjusted vocabulary, we modified punctuation, and we inserted section headings. That was all. The content was left—deliberately so!—perfectly intact; so that the final product is neither a summary nor a condensation nor an abridgment. It would better be called a *translation*. The difficult English of a master theologian and spiritual writer of the 19th Century has been translated into the common tongue of the 21st.

Whoever you are, dear Catholic, whatever duties press upon you in your current state in life, you need not hesitate to pick up this modified masterpiece of Fr. Faber and immerse yourself in its richness. It is perfectly accessible.

It is a book for every Catholic, and that means *you*.